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Modern Indian and Eskimo Missions

The Difficulties, Obstacles and Successes Encountered in the Indian and Eskimo Apostolate

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"WHOEVER WORKS IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD . . . SHOULD BE MADE TO FEEL THAT THE MISSION IS RULED BY A FATHER, WATCHFUL, DILIGENT AND FULL OF CHARITY"

eorge M. Waggett, O.M.I.

olume 5, Number 2

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Modern Indian and Eskimo Missions

THE DIFFICULTIES, OBSTACLES AND SUCCESSES ENCOUNTERED IN THE INDIAN AND ESKIMO APOSTOLATE

By

REV. GEORGE M. WAGGETT, O.M.I.

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1.

The Indian Missions[1]

1. On the rosters of nearly every one of the numerous exploratory and colonizing expeditions which ventured to the New World after its discovery by Columbus are to be found the names of Catholic missionaries. They followed in the wake of Ponce de Leon to Florida, Balboa to the Pacific, Cortez to Mexico, de Soto to the Mississippi, Coronado to New Mexico, Cartier and Champlain to Canada, La Salle through the heart of the continent and Lord Baltimore to Maryland. These sacerdotal pioneers came to the new, raw, dangerous frontier to address themselves not only, indeed not even primarily, to the spiritual care of their fellow Spaniards, Frenchmen and Englishmen, but in a particular manner to the conversion of the heathen natives—the American Indians. A nation of people who knew nothing of Jesus Christ had presented a challenge to their zeal for the spread of the Kingdom of God even to the ends of the earth which could not pass unanswered.

2. That they were highly successful in their initial attempts despite the obstacles of a stubborn paganism, ignorant superstition and not a few martyrdoms is attested by the thousands of baptisms recorded in the Franciscan missions of the Southwest and the Canadian missions of the Jesuits, to mention only two endeavors, within a few years of their inception. These promising beginnings presaged such a roseate future for the Indian apostolate that the missionaries did not think it excessively sanguine to believe that the major portion of the native popula-

1. This material on the Indian missions was assembled from various publications of the dioceses and religious congregations concerned; personal reports of missionaries in the field; the *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Commission for the Catholic Missions Among the Colored People and the Indians;* the *Indian Sentinel,* official organ of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions; the *Calumet,* published in the interests of the Marquette League for Catholic Indian Missions; and reports and documents of the Governments of the United States and Canada. To avoid cluttering a short study of this kind with a plethora of footnotes only direct quotations and necessary additional information have been indicated herein. The text itself may be considered as based on one or other of the above mentioned sources.

tion in the New World could and would be won to the true Faith within a relatively short period of time.

Decline

3. But this was not to be. For we find that at the time of the birth of the infant United States the once flourishing missions had dwindled to infinitesimal proportions. It would be beyond the purpose of this study to go into the many reasons for the decline here. Suffice it to say that the ousting of Catholic Spain and France from North America by Protestant England along with "the corrupting influence of the white man, the white man's fire water, the breakup of the old Indian life * * * the mounting resentment against the whites which was directed to some extent against the missionaries themselves"[2] were responsible for the sad plight of the Indian missions.

4. The missions were never completely abandoned. The work went along on a small scale, but it was not until the latter half of the 19th century that a concerted effort was made to re-establish the apostolate among the once proud natives of North America. The progress since then has been slow, at times exasperatingly snail-like, but has moved ever forward. Once more missionaries are hopeful that the day is approaching when Mother Church will be able to claim most of the dusky-skinned Americans as her own.

The Present Mission Field

5. Our interest here lies in the present day Indian missions of the United States and Canada, a subject which embraces a tremendous expanse of territory but only a fragment of the current population of these countries. In the United States there are now about 400,000 Indians, three-fourths of whom are living on eighty reservations spread over twenty-two states[3] and the territory of Alaska; the others are scattered amidst the white

2. Theodore Maynard, *The Story of American Catholicism*, p. 412.

3. Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

population.[4] The Canadian Indian population is only slightly more than one-fourth that of the United States—125,000—but it is dispersed over the more extensive Canadian domain, there being Indians in every province from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the United States' border to the Arctic Circle.

6. Like the Indian of the United States the Canadian red man generally lives on a reserve—there are 2,000—except in the far north where such a confined existence would not be feasible, not to say impossible, due to the nomadic hunting and fishing life of the native. Both in the United States and Canada the bulk of the Indian population will be found in the western areas, a relic of earlier days when the white man in his greed for land pushed the Indian ever westward. Small groups are still dwelling in the eastern and southern United States and eastern Canada and the maritime provinces. The various autonomous bands and tribes vary from a handful of 500 or less to huge companies numbering thousands, as for example the 56,000 Navajos in New Mexico. Their lands, too, have no common denominator, some extending no more than a few square miles while others are larger than many of our states.

7. It would be well to inject here a warning and an explanation. Many misinformed students of the Indian make the mistake of considering all red men as a single nation. There is less similarity between, let us say, the Navajo and the Iroquois than between a Frenchman and a Spaniard or an Italian and a Portuguese. The Latin peoples of Europe are descendants of a common racial family, but as nations they have developed their own customs, habits, language and peculiarities. So, too, the Indian. Each tribe is a distinct nation, similar in many respects to other tribes because of their common origin, but dissimilar also, in other aspects due to a different environment and way of life.

8. This explanation is inserted because in a limited study of this kind many of the facts must necessarily be stated in gen-

4. We are here concerned only with Indians residing on reservations and those in mission territory e.g., northern Canada and Alaska. Those not on the reservations have generally severed all contact with the others and can no longer be considered culturally as Indian. Their spiritual care is the responsibility of the priest in whose parish they dwell.

eralities in order to cover the most common contingencies. The danger of such a procedure is that some readers may be led to apply every statement to each Indian, an error that should not be propagated. Therefore, let this serve as a warning that not every assertion herein is to be interpreted as applicable without reservation to all Indian peoples. An attempt has been made to select the universal truths, ideas and problems as they are to be found in the typical mission. Some statements will not be verified in this mission or that; other statements will be partly true in one mission; entirely so in another. This unavoidable generalization will be understood and interpreted properly, it is hoped.

The Indian Today

9. No longer are the Indian peoples a "vanishing race," though years of medical care have not completely relieved them of the great scourges (e.g. tuberculosis, trachoma, venereal diseases, measles, whooping cough, etc.) introduced by the white man and to which their constitutions are not yet entirely inured. The birth rate now exceeds the death rate. According to a comparison of census statistics, per thousand population there are three times as many "papooses" born as white babies. While some of these Indian children, no doubt, have some white blood and cannot be considered unadulterated stock, there is a growing pride among the remaining full bloods in maintaining their bloodstream pure, a fact which gives credence to the assertion that race destruction or assimilation into the white population can no longer be predicted, as has commonly been believed.

10. The scalp-seeking redskin so often portrayed in the Class-B movie and the wild West magazine has disappeared. In his present stage of development the Indian is for the most part civilized, or at least semi-civilized, peaceful, law-abiding and sometimes gifted with a high degree of intelligence. Unhappily, though his mind has been brought along considerably from its former savage state, he is still a victim of social and economic circumstances largely beyond his control.

11. Like the Negro, the red man must wage a continual struggle against the staggering odds of racial contempt and a superior attitude on the part of his white neighbors. He is misunderstood, stigmatized as a "drunk," a thief, a criminal, and condemned as lazy and shiftless. It is little wonder, in the face of such treatment, that many have lost their self respect and the desire to improve their lot. What is forgotten is that the Indian is removed from savagery not more than three generations, considerably less in some places.

12. The backwardness of so many is due to nothing more than a timidity fostered by their bewilderment in and unfamiliarity with the white man's world, by their living among a people who regard them with disdain or at best pity, and by a consequent lack of self reliance and initiative. On the whole, given the opportunity, the incentive and the education, there is no reason why the average Indian should not be capable of at least normal achievement. The white race has no monopoly on intelligence. Had the Indian a background of hundreds of years of civilization and culture as we do, his mode of life would very likely be just as "modern" as ours. Once the "palefaces" learn to regard their red brother as a human creature, not some kind of inferior being half a step above the animal, only then will he begin to take his rightful place as a fellow citizen and to use the opportunities which are afforded him.

Problems Confronting the Indian

13. To oversimplify them, the Indian's problems may be reduced to one of economics. His lands are all too generally the poorest of territories, unfit for even meager cultivation and incapable of supporting adequately a growing population. Under such conditions no appreciable advancement can be expected, for it is a truism that a deficient environment contributes mightily to the retrogression of the individual or the group. The Indian departments of the governments of the United States and Canada can and have helped to eliminate some of these evils by the introduction of modern agricultural methods on the reservations and by enriching the soil through

irrigation, but much more remains to be done. These departments need also to revise their inclination to treat the Indian as a child unable to fend for himself. Their over-eagerness to provide him with necessities without teaching him how to earn a gainful living by his own efforts has resulted in leading many an Indian to adopt the attitude that Washington and Ottawa are fairy godfathers who will provide everything needful.

14. A life of everlasting relief and dependence upon others can never be conducive to energetic and industrious effort on the part of the Indian. Catholic missionaries have campaigned incessantly for these economic reforms because they are aware that their own success depends greatly on the living conditions of their people. A man is not likely to be attracted to religion if his prime worry is how he is going to fill his empty stomach or support his destitute family. Relieve his material wants first and it will be relatively easy to amend him spiritually.

15. It would be a mistake to suppose that, because we have here advocated an improvement in the Indian's economic life, all our "white" ways of life should be imposed upon him. Too often it is taken for granted that our cultural conceptions are the only desirable ones. To our dismay, we have often found through bitter experience that other peoples have little desire for or interest in the American way of life. There is no doubt that democracy, mass production, a high standard of living are what we want. But at the same time we have no license to impose these things on others until they themselves so request.

16. The Indian in his contact with the white man has more often than not met nothing but grief. Disease, a lowering of moral standards (what price civilization when a pagan has his "morals" destroyed by a supposedly superior culture!), mistreatment, economic bondage are the "benefits" which the red man has reaped from association with his white neighbors. Indian leaders have become increasingly aware that it is far better for the advancement of their race if their relations with

whites are kept at a minimum, at least until the greater part of their people are sufficiently educated in the ways of modern civilization to be able to sift its good features from the bad. The Indian should be allowed to live his own life as he wants to live it so long as there is nothing evil or sinful in that life.

Need for Leadership

17. More than anything else the Indians need their own leaders. Up to the present those who have risen above the ordinary status of the tribe have almost invariably allowed themselves to be absorbed by the whites and have done very little for their own. They must be taught that they have responsibilities which they should be able to carry themselves; that if their conditions are ever to improve, it will have to be done under the guidance and inspiration of their own. That day when they can stand on their own feet on terms of equality with their fellow Americans and Canadians is not yet in sight.

18. The release from bondage, though still far beyond the horizon, will come if they develop that leadership which appreciates how to take advantage of the privileges that do lie open to them. The late war may have proved a boon to the race in one way. The acquaintance with a wider world and higher standard of living acquired by the 40,000 who left the reservations to work in war industries together with a more alert awareness and increased self-confidence of the thousands of young men and women returning from the armed services should be a powerful stimulus to Indian progress.

Catholic Missionaries among the Indians

19. No organization has done more for the Indian materially as well as spiritually than the Catholic Church. There are few reservations or Indian territories in Canada or the United States where there is not at least one representative of the Church laboring for the good of souls. *The Indian Sentinel* for February, 1947 reports that on the eighty reservations in the United States, there are 212 priests, secular and Religious, 534 Sisters, 66 scholastics and lay brothers, 30 lay teachers,

and 100 Indian catechists. They care for 391 mission chapels, 67 mission schools (28 of which are boarding schools housing 3,902 children and 41 day schools with 3,726 pupils). Out of the 400,000 Indians, about one fourth are Catholics; the bulk of the remainder are still pagans.

20. The following list, though probably incomplete, will provide some idea of the divers groups of priests and Sisters engaged in Indian work: along with secular priests in most of the western dioceses and some other sections of the country, there are Franciscans, Benedictines, Jesuits, Fathers of the Sacred Heart, Capuchins, Society of the Divine Saviour, Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, and Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Among the Sisters are included: Benedictines, Franciscans, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Sisters of Saint Joseph, Ursulines, Sisters of Mercy, Dominicans, Grey Nuns, and Sisters of Charity of Providence.

21. The number of Catholic Indians is largest in the Franciscan missions of the Southwest where the number of Indians is also the largest. The next largest group dwells in the Northwest and the majority there is Catholic. There is active and effective work in the Dakotas. In the Great Lakes area the prospects are encouraging, nearly half the Indians practicing the Faith, but they are broken up into so many small groups that the ministry is rendered very difficult. Missionary work on a smaller scale goes on in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, New York, Maine, Louisiana and Mississippi.

22. The average size of an Indian congregation would be statistically 200. Actually, however, the typical one is much larger or smaller. Even the large congregations are rarely a compact group, for the population is usually spread thinly over many square miles.

Canadian Indians

23. In the provinces of Canada, according to the 1944 census, there are 125,000 Indians of whom 64,000 are Catholics, 56,000 Protestants (mostly Anglicans and United Church Brethren) and 5,000 pagans. There the predominant Indian

missionaries are the Oblates of Mary Immaculate whose 200 missions, 24 boarding schools and 58 elementary day schools are staffed by 98 priests and 45 lay brothers of four of the five Canadian provinces. About 45,000 of the 64,000 Catholics are under their spiritual care, or to put it another way, between ninety and one hundred thousand of the 125,000 Indians constitute their missionary field. Five Vicariates, all having Indians among their inhabitants, are under the jurisdiction of Oblate bishops and are manned almost exclusively by Oblate priests.

24. The remainder of the population is ministered to by Jesuits, Priests of the Company of Mary, Eudists, Augustinians, Franciscans and the diocesan clergy. The Sisters who assist these priests are: Daughters of Providence of Saint Brieuc, Missionary Oblates of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate, Benedictine Sisters of Manitoba, Sisters of the Assumption, Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, Sisters of Providence, Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Sisters of Saint Ann, Sisters of Saint Martha, Sisters of Saint Joseph, Grey Nuns of Montreal, Ottawa and Saint Hyacinthe, Sisters of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Sisters of the Child Jesus, Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Christ the King.

25. The glamor which is invariably associated with the missionary endeavors of such spiritual giants as Peter de Smet, S. J., Junipero Serra, O. F. M., the secular priests, Francis N. Blanchet and Modeste Demers, and the Black Robed Voyageur, Father Lacombe, O. M. I., is somehow missing now in the Indian missions; and one may well doubt that it ever did exist or that these pioneers ever found any glamor in their labors.

Qualifications of an Indian Missioner

26. The work is prosaic, difficult, at times exasperating, physically enervating and often discouraging in the external results. The priest must be a combination of pastor and missionary, jack-of-all-trades, counsellor and business agent for his people. Generally, he has at least a small nucleus of Catholics to constitute his parish and among these he works like any ordinary pastor. He administers the Sacraments, he preaches, he

holds Divine Services, he has missions, retreats, novenas and other special devotions, he cares for the sick and the dying, he acts as counsellor and mediator in their dealings with the white man, he buries the dead. In a word, his purpose is to hold the gains already made and to strengthen and intensify the Faith of the members of his flock.

27. A schedule of this nature devours most of the missioner's time. But like all missionaries, the Indian apostle—except for those who live on the few completely Catholic reservations—has another obligation to fulfill. There are the "other sheep not of this fold" to whom he must also offer the words of eternal life. There are still thousands of pagan Indians every bit as ignorant of Jesus Christ as the Negro of darkest Africa. It is not difficult for the priest to gain a hearing among these spiritually benighted peoples, when and if he can find the time to spare from his other duties, but it is an exhausting task to persuade the adult pagan to change from his superstitious religious practices.

28. Even after he has been won to the Faith, the Indian often retains remnants of his old beliefs in signs, visions and ghosts. As a partial explanation of this stubbornness, it must be remembered that the red man has worshipped in his own religion for thousands of years and one cannot expect to change his beliefs completely in a generation or two. The taboos, the ritualistic formalities and the customs which are part and parcel of his spiritistic religion are so engrained in his nature that a long process of pruning is necessary before they are totally eradicated. Happily, among the younger generations, educated in a Christian way of life, superstition has ceased to exert much influence.

The Need for Schools

29. The future success of Catholicism is among the present children and adolescents, and so the missionaries, when they are fortunate enough to possess the funds, invariably have erected a school adjacent to the Church. The importance of the school in training the students in a Christian outlook on life and in equipping them for the development of a happy and holy Catholic family environment in later years cannot be over-

estimated. Since few of the pupils have any ambition to compete in the white man's world when they reach adulthood, the curriculum of their schools does not overly stress academic studies. The emphasis is rather on vocational, character and religious instruction so that the child will be enabled to obtain a solid foundation in the principles of how to win a better living under the conditions of his native environment as well as that knowledge which will form him into a worthwhile citizen and a practicing Catholic.

Missionary School Problems

30. As yet there are all too few Catholic schools. This is not a criticism of the missionaries. The problems facing the priest or Sister who desires to establish a school are enough to make the most sanguine despair of success. First, there is the matter of finance. Since little or nothing is obtained from the Indians themselves, the builder must lean on the generosity of benefactors like the Marquette League for Catholic Indian Missions and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions for support. Too much cannot be said in praise of the assistance provided by these charitable organizations. But they cannot bear the entire burden. The money available to them must be diffused over a wide area and consequently, they cannot offer to each individual mission as much as they would like.

31. In Canada, most mission schools are supported largely by government grant. It has been urged that this policy ought to be adopted in the United States, too, but there are drawbacks in this solution. Whenever government agencies underwrite an institution, they assume the right to supervise and interfere in its operation. Very often this leads to conflict between government regulations and the policy of the institution which inevitably does harm to the projects of that institution.

32. There are other problems besides the financial one in erecting a mission school. Where are the instructors and teachers to be found? The dioceses and the religious Orders cannot fill every post; lay help is hard to obtain and to keep long after they are persuaded to accept; the Indians are not yet sufficiently educated as a whole to be able to provide more than a handful

of their own as teachers. Then there is the delicate and trying task of convincing parents of the advantages to be derived from a good education for their children; many find it beyond their comprehension to appreciate its value. Finally, the Catholic school must meet stiff competition from non-Catholic and government sponsored schools that are more richly endowed and thus can offer inducements which attract the Indian more readily than the humble Catholic institution.

Obstacles to Evangelization

33. The evangelization of the American Indian would long since have been abandoned were it not for the spirit of faith which vitalizes the missionary's every effort. One unfamiliar with the Christ-inspired thirst for souls which compels men and women to leave home and family and friends cannot be expected to understand how the priest and Sister are able to accept cheerfully the many crosses of their chosen life. The obstacles, the problems, the difficulties which they must face in seemingly endless succession are enough to bend the strongest back under their weight.

34. It is conceivable that a frail ambassador of Christ will surmount the physical stumbling blocks of fatigue, torturous journeys in good weather and bad, disagreeable environment and continuous difficult manual work, but no pessimistic, easily discouraged or cynical missioner will make the grade. The Indian missionary must anticipate set-backs, lack of response, indifference, instability and fickleness on the part of his charges. Just when he feels that he has succeeded in winning over the red men from paganism and immorality, he finds them sliding back into some of their former vices. He has to thunder against excessive drinking, unlawful marriages and gambling until the mention of these subjects nauseates him, and still the problems remain.

35. He uses every means at his disposal to counteract the vicious effects of too close contact of his people with loose moralled whites and yet the moment his back is turned the ignorant native is victimized again. He has to meet the

competition of affluent Protestant sects, and how often he witnesses souls that he had thought safely corralled for Christ escape to the darkness of error, lured by the promise of material gain which he cannot offer. He has to combat the bigotry and errors and lies spread by unscrupulous non-Catholic clergymen who envy his success notwithstanding the countless obstacles. Despite his vigilance in eradicating all semblances of superstitious practices, he is chagrinned time and again by the discovery of such paganistic practices as the vicious "peyote"[5] cult infiltrating among his weaker Catholics.

Financial Problems

36. While struggling against these problems, he is at the same time operating his missions on a "shoestring" economy. His people, seldom able to eke out more than a primitive existence from their deficient soil, are unable to support their churches, even if they fully appreciated the obligation of the fifth commandment of the Church. Much of the missionary's precious time is spent in devising means of securing the financial assistance necessary to carry on the various mission projects or is dissipated in the performance of manual work which cannot be consigned to hired help because the funds to pay them are not available.

37. The hours so expended are lost forever so far as the direct work for the salvation of souls is concerned. As indicated before in the discussion of the mission schools, the help provided by the Catholic organizations for Indian missions has contributed immeasurably to whatever success the missions have so far attained. Without their assistance, it is safe to say that a goodly number of the missions would have had to close their doors. However, a substantial increase in the treasuries of every mission is essential before the hopes of the Indian evangelists to expand their activities in new directions can be fully realized.

5. Peyote is a drug obtained from the buttons of a species of cactus indigenous to Mexico. When eaten, it causes much the same reactions as the marijuana weed—overestimation of time, visual disturbances, destruction of moral values. In a few months the addict becomes a mental, physical and moral wreck. Its devotees have formed a cult (under the name of Native American Church) which is a weird hybrid of Christian and pagan practices in an effort to circumvent the federal ban on traffic in this violent narcotic.

The Need for Workers

38. There is scarcely a missionary anywhere in the world who, if queried on the subject of missionary problems, will fail to include the insufficient number of recruits and replacements, both priests and Sisters, in the field. The Indian missions suffer from a serious lack of workers. Bishops and the religious Orders do not have the numbers that will permit them to cover each post adequately. Consequently, the huge territories and the large populations under the charge of each missioner are often more than he can supervise satisfactorily. In many instances, though reluctant to do so, he is compelled to be content with preserving the gains already made rather than attempt to make any intensified effort to extend further the kingdom of Christ. The nature of Indian evangelization with its many fatiguing labors, its few consolations and comforts, its frequent disappointments, its squalid poverty and unpleasant environment, seems to be the decisive factor in discouraging vocations to the apostolate.

39. The outline of Indian missionary work as given in the preceding paragraphs readily suggests the remedies necessary to cure the ills that remain.

Attitude of the White Race

40. No appreciable improvement in the lot of the Indian will be effected until there is a basic change in the attitude of the many whites who make no secret of their contempt for the members of the red race. Until that state of mind is transformed into a more charitable attitude, can the red man be censured if, as his form of escapism and protest, he retires into a shell of paganism and semi-savagery and refuses to budge therefrom? The Indian is celebrated for his pride; when it is hurt, even unconsciously, by unthinking whites, he does not let it pass unnoticed. It is the duty of all priests whose people are in frequent contact with Indians to root out any such antipathetical dispositions. Otherwise, the missionaries will experience the sad consequence of a feeble response to their doctrinal preaching and teaching.

41. A more extensive educational effort, designed to wrest the Indian from his remaining links with superstition and savagery and to provide him with his own leaders in all walks of life, is a *sine qua non* for the material advancement and the Christianization of the race. This supposes not only an increase in the number of schools for the training of children but also an integrated plan to acquaint the adult with the use of modern implements and conveniences so that the hand-to-mouth economy under which he now exists can be eliminated in favor of a more respectable way of life.

42. The delinquency, immorality and addiction to superstitious paganism still to be found among so many Indians may be attributed in no small measure to the want and poverty of an abject environment. Aware of these facts, missionaries have played a leading role in the fight to secure a better way of life for their people. While their efforts have not met complete success yet, they have at least been influential in creating a greater respect and admiration among the Indians for the Church.

Missionary Vocations

43. The missions will need a substantial increase in the number of vocations before there can be a spectacular rise in the yearly amount of converts. With a sufficient amplification in the ranks of the workers (particularly in regard to the diocesan clergy since this work is primarily the business of the parish priest, even though the missioners are still in the great majority, Religious), there is ample reason to believe that a large percentage of the Indian population could be attracted to the Faith in a short time.

44. At the present time, despite the paucity of workers and the many difficulties, one-fourth of the Indians in the United States and Alaska are Catholics and one half of those in Canada, and the number increases slowly but steadily each year. Is it not incontestable, therefore, to assert that, given more priests and Sisters, the yearly average of converts will be proportionately greater?

45. It might be fairly asked, "What about native vocations?" Very little along these lines has been achieved so far; nor does the immediate future promise much. There are no more than a handful of Indian priests in the United States and Canada. Likewise, few girls have expressed any desire to devote their lives to the sisterhoods. One notable exception in the United States is the Oblate Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament founded by Rev. Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B. at Marty, South Dakota, in 1935 at the request of a group of Indian girls there. They follow the regular life of an active Order, being engaged in various works at the Marty mission. A hint to the reasons for the lack of Indian vocations has been given before. Insufficient education, lack of Catholic background and instability are the causes. Until the red man has been thoroughly steeped in Catholic culture, vocations will be few and far between.

46. Not a few experienced missioners are of the opinion that it would be folly to rush Indians into the sacerdotal and religious lives at the present time. They are well aware, of course, that it is the desire of the Church to develop a native clergy in every mission field. But with priestly caution, they are reluctant to expose the Divine Truths to possible misuse by those who are not properly prepared by a thorough saturation in Catholic doctrine. Hence there will be no large scale enlistments of Indian boys and girls in the sacerdotal and sisterhood ranks in the near future. This does not mean that every individual who shows signs of the Divine call is discouraged. If an Indian boy or girl can meet the qualifications, the missionaries are ready and willing to promote their entrance into the seminary or convent.

47. A missionary would hardly be displeased, though he would certainly feel a strange sense of loss, if he were relieved of the burden of financial worry. For an inevitable part of his daily existence is the disheartening struggle to keep his head above the waters of monetary problems. Valuable time and effort that could be devoted to religious labors are lost because

he must devise means of augmenting his meager treasury. Catholic people can be Cyrenians and help the missionary to carry this financial cross by increased donations to mission aid societies such as the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, The Society of Saint Peter the Apostle for Native Clergy, The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, and the Marquette League for Catholic Indian Missions.

48. However, the people will be only as generous as their parish priests are zealous in preaching, publicizing and propagandizing the needs of the missions when the opportunity presents itself. It should not be necessary to emphasize that the obligation to be mission-minded is not something that is shed when one leaves the seminary and commences his ministry. Helping the missions financially is one practical way for the priest far from mission territory to give concrete evidence of his mission-mindness.

Importance of Prayer

49. This pamphlet would not be worthy of dissemination if we neglected to recall to the readers the importance of prayer for the success of the missions. No religious effort, no matter how heroically conceived, no matter how richly endowed, will attain lasting results without the propelling action of humble, sincere prayer. And conversely, humanly insurmountable obstacles will be dashed aside and great things for the Kingdom of Christ on earth will be accomplished through the power of prayer. Certainly, it is not necessary to stress further this subject to our ecclesiastical readers; they are surely cognizant of the spiritual *elan vital* of prayer. We have only this one further suggestion to make: that, having read this study, the readers in their charity reserve a place in their prayers for the successful evangelization of the Indian tribes of the United States and Canada and for the heroic men and women who are giving their lives for this cause so precious to the Sacred Heart of Christ.

2.
The Eskimo Missions[6]

Background

50. Across the top of the world, north of the limit of vegetation, in the land of perpetual ice and snow, there dwells that singular branch of the human family called the Eskimo. Though relatively few in numbers—recent estimates compute their total in North America at about 30,000—these people are scattered over an area of more than two and a half million square miles, stretching 5,000 along the Arctic coast from below Cook Inlet in Alaska to the mouth of the Saint Lawrence river. Some idea of the immensity of the Eskimo habitat can be gathered from comparison with the United States of which it is roughly two thirds the size.

51. No description could adequately portray the desolation and sterility of this region. A vast desert of ice and snow, no living vegetation, save a few berries and some dry, gray moss, grows there. The climate is a brutal enemy whose treachery is a constant menace to the seasoned inhabitant and the novice alike. Only six or eight weeks of the year are comfortable; the remainder of the time the temperature ranges anywhere from thirty to seventy degrees below zero and is accompanied frequently by the devastating fury of storms, blizzards and gales that are matched in intensity nowhere else on the face of the globe.

52. Until recently, when the war gave impetus to the importance of the Far North as an air route, a potential source of minerals and a possible course of invasion of the American continent, understandably, few civilized whites, except a handful

6. Along with the sources already mentioned in the study on the Indian missions, for the preparation of this section the following additional works were consulted: P. O'Connor, S. J., *Eskimo Parish;* Alma Savage, *Dogsled Apostles;* Adrian G. Morice, O. M. I., *Thawing Out the Eskimo;* Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing, D. D., *The Battle of Hudson's Bay;* Pierre Duchaussois, O. M. I., *Mid Snow and Ice.*

of traders, metereologists, doctors and government employes had any interest in these barren lands. But the Catholic Church has long been concerned about the salvation of the souls who inhabit these uttermost parts of the earth and in obedience to the injunction of the First Missionary to "go forth and teach all nations," valiant missionaries, priest, Sisters and Brothers, have been dedicating themselves to the arduous task of bringing a knowledge of Christ and Him crucified to the natives of the frozen north.

53. Before the story of their accomplishments and their difficulties is recounted, as a preface, it is necessary to understand something of the social organization, character, the habits and the pagan religious beliefs of the Eskimo so that a proper appreciation may be formed of the work that has been done.

The Eskimo

54. With the exception of the Aleuts, who live on the islands that reach out toward Siberia from the southwest shores of Alaska and who differ somewhat from the rest, the Eskimos are a homogeneous people, linguistically and ethnologically. They speak the same language, in several dialects, practice the same customs and worship in the same religion. Although the Eskimo in the Mackenzie Delta and the Alaskan regions has been more affected by civilization than the one in the central and eastern Arctic and is adopting the white man's ways gradually, in the main even he has not yet changed radically in his thinking, especially with regard to religious ideas, and he still retains much of his primitive culture.

His Life

55. As a consequence of their environment the Eskimos are of necessity a migratory people, wandering from place to place in search of the caribou and seal which constitute their staple means of subsistence. Their social organization is, therefore, very uncomplicated; each little group—seldom more than two or three families—is distinct and independent of the others. There is little tribal cohesion or authority under a chief. The head man of the group acts in the capacity of an advisor rather than a

ruler, interpreting established customs which have the force of law. The family unit is closely knit. So strong is the bond of affection that the children are seldom corrected or punished. Older people receive the highest respect and reverence.

His Character

56. The Eskimo is generally good humored, has respect for the laws of hospitality, is courteous, friendly of disposition and peaceable. His hardy environment has developed in him a deliberate coolness of judgment and stoicism which effectively conceals his real emotions under an appearance of calm and which never permits him to evidence weakness in decision or action. Unlike many of the Indians, he possesses keen intelligence, resourcefulness, remarkable ingenuity, a fine sense of artistry and skillful ability in craftsmanship. Gifted with a positive love of work and the acquisition of knowledge, he learns quickly and never seeks idleness for its own sake. As an expert and daring boatman he has no peer. The finer points of hunting and fishing are second nature to him. His tools, weapons, igloos and kayaks, so essential for survival in the Arctic, are expertly fashioned and admirably suited for their purposes. The very fact that he has been able to sustain himself in such a harsh country is eloquent testimony to his adaptability and resourcefulness.

57. Naturally, the Eskimo is a strong, hardy individual with a constitution well able to withstand the rigors of Arctic existence. However, owing to the constant exposure to chilling waters and clime, he is not long-lived. Also, since his meeting with the white man, he has become prey to diseases which meet no resistance from his unaccustomed system and thus he is often the victim of severe epidemics. The incidence of tuberculosis, for example, is shockingly high. The Canadian government estimates that 10.5 per cent of the Eskimos under her care have contracted this killer, an average that is much higher than the Arctic accident rate. Another factor that accounts for the high disease total and the short life span is the filthy living conditions of the Eskimo. Lack of water, crowded quarters, greasy food

plus unimaginable dirty personal habits make him prone to the attack of germs.

58. On the debit side, the Eskimo has the common savage disregard for the laws of morality. Lying is as customary to him as the ice and snow of his habitat. So expert is he in this *malum* that for years he can and will keep up a deception without once changing the circumstances of his story. Hand in hand with lying and often its cause is thievery. Ownership and personal property are forgotten conceptions when desire of another's possessions seizes him, and like many of his supposedly more civilized white brothers the only sin is in getting caught. In the past very often these thefts led to frequent horrible murders, but due to the increasing influence of Christianity and the efficiency of the police, recent years have seen no more of these crimes. It is in the matter of sexual vices where the Eskimo is the most degraded. Adultery, polygamy and polyandry are openly accepted among the pagans. A man does not hesitate to divorce his wife on little or no pretext, and often will have no scruples in lending her to a friend or guest under the guise of hospitality and courtesy. To his credit, however, the Eskimo has never been accused of crimes against nature, something of which white men cannot boast.

His Religion

59. The Eskimo religion is comparable to that of most pagan peoples. It takes the form of simple animism or Shamanism, interpreted by the *angakoks* (sorcerers or medicine men) and enforced by numerous senseless taboos and ceremonial precautions. All the powers of nature, animate and inanimate, on sea and land, are invoked or propitiated as occasion arises. Every relation whether personal, social or civil is governed by this sorcery. The shrewd, roguish medicine man wields the only semblance of authority the Eskimo recognizes and thus reigns as a virtual dictator. By means of incantations, chants, masks, drums and bones, he claims the power to reveal the future, to discover lost and hidden things, to overcome misfortunes or disasters that are threatened by vindictive or offended spirits.

60. So vivid is the Eskimo's faith in the spirit world that the sorcerer is able easily to deceive his misguided votaries into according him a reputation for infallibility and accepting him as a legitimate mediator between the visible and invisible world. Few of these sorcerers seem to have any personal belief in their supposed powers. Rather they look upon their position as a profitable business which at the same time affords them tremendous influence over their clientele. The profession is hereditary, being transmitted with all its mysterious accouterments and paraphernalia to sons and grandsons.

61. There is no truth in the assertion that the Arctic dwellers had no religion except superstition until the coming of the white man. They recognized a Creator, believed in immortality and accepted the fact of a state of retributive rewards and punishments beyond the grave. If their religion could be summed up in a single phrase, it would be "submission to the Divine Will." They have no concept of Divine Love or Mercy, believing simply that if they are obedient to the wishes of the gods and goddesses who preside over hunting and fishing and the conservation of human life, as interpreted by the medicine man, and observe the network of taboos, their reward will be an abode of material happiness in the life to come.

62. These people constitute one small segment of the human family for whom Jesus Christ came upon earth to suffer and die and for love of whose souls the poignant words, "I thirst," came forth from the Sacred Lips as the dying Saviour hung on the cross. The Church has been commissioned by Christ to fetch all souls into her net; therefore, she cannot and she will not neglect to bring the gospel message to even the most abandoned, the most savage, the most degraded of peoples. It should not be surprising, when these facts are recalled, to learn that missionaries have been laboring in the desolate Arctic among the Eskimos for many years.

Russian Orthodox Missionaries

63. The first attempts at evangelization among the Eskimos were not made by Mother Church. In 1794 the Russian

Orthodox Church sent some of her clergy to the then Russian colony of Alaska to preach the doctrines of Christianity to the Aleuts. The efforts of these missionaries were most successful, almost the entire population being converted in a few years. To this day a good part of the Aleuts have retained their Orthodox beliefs, though in recent years there has been a noticeable decline in religious practice because of the lack of support and open hostility on the part of the Soviet government toward the missionaries sent out to Alaska by the Russian Church.

First Catholic Missionaries

64. The initial preaching of Catholicism to the Alaskan Eskimos was inaugurated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Athabaska-Mackenzie Vicariate in Canada as early as 1862 in the person of Father Seguin who was, however, unsuccessful in establishing a permanent mission among them because of lack of response and the severe opposition from Protestant ministers already there. Other visits of Oblate missionaries, notably those of Father Emil Petitot in 1870 and a group under the leadership of Bishop Clut, auxiliary of the Athabaska Vicariate, in 1872, were made to the territory. On the latter trip they were so well received that it was decided to establish a permanent mission at Saint Michael, a small trading post just north of the mouth of the Yukon river, with Father Lecorre in charge. Only a short time after the foundation of this project Bishop Faraud, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Athabaska-Mackenzie, was informed by the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith that Alaska was outside his jurisdiction and belonged rather under the charge of the Bishop of the diocese of Vancouver. Father Lecorre was accordingly recalled and the evangelization of Alaska was left to others.

The Jesuits in Alaska

65. In 1886 Bishop Charles Jean Seghers of Vancouver and Alaska, in need of priests for the Alaskan apostolate, invited the Jesuits to assume the responsibility. They accepted and in the same year two priests came to start the work. Since that

time Alaska has been almost exclusively a Jesuit field. So satisfactorily did the work advance that the territory was made a Prefecture Apostolic in 1894 and a Vicariate Apostolic in 1916. Today, according to the *1947 Annual Report of the Secretary of the Commission for the Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians,* there are 6,473 native Catholics, half of whom are Eskimos, the rest Indians. The total Eskimo population, by official estimate, is about 22,000. Besides twenty-three Jesuit priests and eight lay brothers there are ten secular priests and one Friar of the Atonement.

66. The clergy are assisted by several religious communities of women: the Sisters of Charity of Providence, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Newark, Sisters of Saint Anne, Ursulines, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart (Philadelphia) and seven Sisters of Our Lady of the Snows, a native Eskimo congregation founded by Father John P. Fox, S.J. in 1932. The missionaries operate forty-six churches (twenty have resident priests), three boarding schools, three day schools, three orphanages with a total enrollment of 450 children and seven hospitals caring for 6,500 patients. Not all these institutions are exclusively for the Eskimos, but practically everyone counts some among their constituents.

Canadian Eskimos

67. In Canada there are considerably fewer Eskimos than in Alaska, the latest figures putting them at 7,700. The vast majority of these, some 6,000, dwell within the limits of the Hudson Bay Vicariate, largest in the world—its area is 1,680,000 square miles—and farthest north; the others are under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of the Mackenzie Vicariate. Both of these mission territories are manned exclusively by priests and Brothers of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who are assisted in educational, religious instruction and hospital work by the Grey Nuns of Montreal.

68. As a young priest Bishop Arsene Turquetil, O.M.I., popularly known as the Bishop of the North Pole and now

deservedly retired after thirty years among the Eskimos, founded the first permanent mission among the Canadian Eskimos at Chesterfield Inlet in 1912. For five years he labored and prayed before he was granted the consolation of baptizing his first adult convert. The work progressed dishearteningly slowly for many more years. From 1917 to 1925 the yearly average of converts was ten; from 1926 to 1930 thirty-seven; and from 1931 to 1940 the number jumped to seventy-one. The territory of Hudson Bay, originally a part of the Mackenzie Vicariate, became a Prefecture in 1925 and a Vicariate in 1932.

69. At the present time, out of the total population of 6,000 Eskimos there are 800 Catholics and 700 catechumens. The personnel consists of thirty Oblate priests, seven lay brothers and seven Grey Nuns. Fourteen missions have resident priests and there are twenty-eight out-stations. Fourteen primary schools care for 140 pupils. A hospital under the direction of the Grey Nuns has been in operation at Chesterfield for some years.

The Mackenzie Vicariate

70. The Mackenzie Vicariate which adjoins Hudson Bay is populated largely by Indian tribes, but has 1,500 or so Eskimos in its northern extremities. Twelve Oblate priests operate seven missions with the assistance of five lay brothers and ten Grey Nuns. At Aklavik, a boarding school accommodates sixty children. So far 350 of the Eskimos have embraced Catholicism and each year sees a few more enter the fold.

71. Such are the cold facts of the missions in the Far North, but mere numbers cannot tell the true story of the heroic sacrifices, the magnificent accomplishments, the superhuman obstacles overcome and the heavy problems that still remain to be tackled by the courageous men and women who have dedicated themselves to the conversion of these pagans. Here no more than a brief glance into that account can be given, but without at least a mention, the tale would not be complete.

Effects of Christianity

72. A significant transformation, both spiritual and physical, has come over the Arctic inhabitants since their introduction to the Catholic Faith. By the substitution of Christian practices for the pagan mode of life among their converts the missionaries have certainly helped to save the race from almost sure extinction; in the new Christian generations the numbers, once dwindling, are now on the increase. The clan spirit has been superseded by the Christian idea of the family. Marriage between near relatives is becoming a thing of the past and with it sterility and rickets. Infanticide is also disappearing and in the last few years there have been no more of the cruel murders that before were committed on the slightest provocation. Christianity has succeeded, also, in eliminating many of the taboos which worked so many hardships on the superstitious clients of the *angakoks*. Through their instruction in sanitation as well as the providing of hospitals and clinics for the ill, the missionaries have reduced the menace of many crippling and deadly diseases.

73. These marvelous results are not the fruition of a haphazard procedure; rather they are a testimony to the wisdom of the time-tested missionary master plan of the Church. The missionary life in its substantial organization is the same everywhere. Its methodology directs that the missionary accommodate himself to the native's way of existence as far as possible, living it with him, preserving what is worthwhile in that life, but Christianizing it and directing it towards that closer union with Christ and His Church which alone can insure the salvation of men's souls. It is of the Divine Universality of the Church that it has always been able to assimilate and transform the pagan without interfering with the necessary conditions of his life.

The Eskimo Apostle

74. The first business of the neophyte Eskimo apostle is to learn the language and become fully acquainted with the customs and habits of his people in order that he may be prepared to preach the Gospel in a manner lucid and reasonable to his

listeners. In the beginning he will have to resort to the use of an interpreter, but that lasts only until he has become proficient enough with the language to express his own thoughts. Veteran missioners frown on excessive employment of the interpreter and demand that young priests become familiar with the speech of their charges as speedily as their talents will permit; otherwise their ministry will be greatly hampered. Unlike the Protestant missionaries who print the Bible in the native tongue as soon as possible and distribute them, a practice which only results in confusing and misleading the unlettered native readers, the priest gives instruction solely through the spoken word until his listeners are prepared for baptism. Then, having been adjudged sufficiently grounded in the fundamentals of the Faith, the converts are given prayerbooks, the catechism and the Bible.

Difficulties to Parochial Activities

75. Under present conditions—and no immediate solution seems practicable—it is impossible to settle the Eskimos in one spot and organize regular parochial activities because of the constant migration of the people in search of the animals and fish that make up their daily menu. There are few spots in the Arctic where farming or any other form of stable existence is feasible even during the short summer. Some families in Alaska, having found employment in salmon canneries and other occupations of like nature, are remaining in villages, but these form the exception rather than the rule. Hence a systematic catechumenate among the Eskimos is far from easy to institute. The missionary must follow them from one small camp to another, eating, sleeping, traveling as one of them, and use his few spare moments to teach them the rudiments of religion.

76. With so many of these camps, the great distances between them and the fierce Arctic weather, visits are few and far between; consequently, instruction is a slow, lengthy, tedious process. When the Eskimos camp near the mission itself for any period of time, the instruction is intensified: three or four sermons a day are given; private visits are made; the children are called to catechism classes frequently; and the common

prayers (*Pater, Ave, Credo, etc.*) are committed to memory and recited often. The duration of the individual's catechumenate is determined, as with any prospective convert, by the degree of religious instruction and the personal dispositions of the candidate. Naturally, because of the infrequency of his lessons in doctrine, the Eskimo is ordinarily placed on a long period of probation before admittance to baptism. But once accomplished, his conversion is real. His natural tenacity makes the Eskimo as deeply attached to Catholicism as he formerly was to paganism. His childlike devotion and fidelity to the Sacraments would make his civilized Catholic brethren blush for shame at the comparison.

77. Missionary life gives rise to many problems and obstacles; the barrier of a foreign and unfamiliar language, the struggle to acquire the funds to finance the various projects, the lack of sufficient personnel are common to all missionary fields. In addition to these, the Arctic missions have many more that are peculiarly its own. The dispersion of the inhabitants over an immense expanse of territory and the consequent difficulty of access to them make the priests' and Sisters' lives one exhausting trip by dogsled or boat after another. When the journeys must be made in temperatures that plummet beyond the lowest limits of the thermometer, through gales and blizzards of demoniacal fury, the difficulties of the Arctic ministry and the true heroism of those who voluntarily accept them for the extension of Christ's kingdom on earth may be at least dimly appreciated. The Eskimo apostolate demands phenomenal physical endurance, singleminded devotion, complete self sacrifice. It would be impossible without the sustaining power of an invincible faith. It is significant that, while most government officials and others who venture into the Far North for one reason or another find it imperative to return to the "outside" after a short time, missionaries stay there without a vacation for ten, twenty or thirty years.

78. Perhaps the greatest cross which the Arctic apostle must bear is the solitude. If he is fortunate, he has a companion. However, he must usually live alone for months at a time, sometimes even years, far away from his own kind, from the life to which he has been accustomed, from contact with his fellow

missioners, from the comforts and conveniences of civilization, from the pleasure of congenial companionship. It takes a strong character to bear up under the burden of this trial.

79. The character of the Eskimo is often a source of great affliction to the missionary. Frank, firm, generous, the Eskimo makes an ideal Catholic when converted, but he is slow to convince and to reach decisions. Having a background of centuries of paganism, these hardboiled people cling to their sorcery and superstition with a tenacity that discourages all but the most optimistic soul. This obstinacy constitutes the greatest single obstacle to their spiritual progress. The children are more easily managed and are the redeeming consolation for the missionary. The Eskimo is, too, an expert scoffer and mimicker, particularly of one who is learning to speak his language. He will not listen, without making fun of the speaker, to anyone who cannot use it correctly, and nothing short of perfection will do. To increase the difficulties further, he is not used to thinking of supernatural things and has no words for them. Existing words must be employed to convey the ideas as best they can.

Protestant Missionaries

80. Protestant missionaries, by their very presence in the same territory as the Catholic priests and Sisters, involuntarily create an obstruction to the spread of the Faith in the Arctic. Unable to differentiate between the forms of Christianity as he hears them preached by the representatives of opposing beliefs, the pagan Eskimo is bewildered and scandalized at the contradictory statements of the white clergymen and frequently ends up by adopting neither religion. It is not rare, also, for the Catholic missionary to have to contend with vicious lies and misinterpretations of his actions spread by malevolent non-Catholics as a means of hampering his ministry.

81. The material problems of supplying the missions and of communication among them present serious difficulties. The inaccessibility and the distance from civilization of many of the locations make it an impossibility to furnish them with needed

supplies more than once a year. And because of the difficulties involved, rates for hauling freight in the Arctic are inflationary—anywhere from forty to ninety dollars a ton is the ordinary charge, depending on the destination. Modern conveniences are being used more and more in the North and in some cases the missions have their own planes and boats, an innovation that has helped considerably to reduce expenses and speed the supplying of the various posts. The radio, too, has played an important role in relieving the solitude of isolated priests and Sisters, keeping contact with them, and informing the central mission of any sickness or accident among its scattered personnel.

Future of the Eskimo Mission

82. Despite these seemingly overwhelming obstacles the Church, through the self sacrificing labors of her valiant northern missionaries, has marched steadily forward. On the basis of the number of converts baptized each year and the remarkable change in the pagan Eskimo's attitude towards the Faith, it does not seem too presumptious to predict that the time will come when a majority of the race will have embraced Catholicism. To Americans, educated to think in astronomical numbers in this atomic age, the results thus far achieved may seem pitifully small—less than 5,000 Catholics out of a total population of 30,000. But when one recalls that they have been accomplished in the short space of only slightly more than sixty years by a handful of missionaries, against the crushing odds of stubborn paganism and superstition, treacherous climate, brutal terrain and abject poverty on the part of both the missionaries themselves and their people, the true magnificence and success of the Arctic missions are brought into relief and hope for the continued advance of the Church in those regions seems assured.

Need for Aid

83. The Arctic Church will go forward even more gloriously in the future if Catholics, clergy and lay alike, realize that they, too, play a part in the evangelization of the Eskimo, even though they are not called by Almighty God to dedicate their

lives to the actual ministry there. Priests and Sisters, particularly, can awaken and foster vocations among young men and women who are perhaps waiting for some human agency to stir them up to the realization that they are being invited to give themselves to this life which so closely patterns that of Christ. The personnel is far from sufficient yet; many more apostles will be needed before the complete evangelization, so well begun by the pioneers, can be brought to fruition.

84. The Northern Church has never been so blest with financial support as to find itself completely "out of the red." As fast as contributions are received, they are eaten up by the needs of the established missions and by the expenses entailed in the development of new projects. This support comes chiefly from missionary aid societies and the religious congregations to which the missionaries belong. To augment these contributions missionaries, on occasion, return to civilization and visit parishes, pious societies and even secular organizations, preaching the needs of their missions, in an effort to stimulate interest and enthusiasm for their work and to build up their depleted mission treasuries by soliciting voluntary donations. Priests in the better endowed parishes could make a Christlike gesture if they would not only send aid to these missions themselves, but would as well instruct their parishioners, when opportunity affords, on the work being done in Alaska and Canada for the Eskimos and urge them to assist it financially. Also the clergy might help in a very practical and painless way by sending their excess Mass stipends to these missions. But if it is impossible to proffer monetary assistance, at least it will be no imposition upon anyone to get down on his knees and beg God's continued blessings upon the Eskimos and their heroic apostles. It is respectfully suggested and requested that all who read these lines become fellow Arctic missionaries with the priests and Sisters of the Far North at least through the spiritual affinity of prayer.

85. There may be some who wonder if the efforts expended in trying to convert the Eskimo, especially when the toll in hardship and suffering is considered, are justified in the results. So

few souls have been won to Christ as yet; so much more must be done before complete victory is achieved. Is it spiritually worthwhile? To such skeptics the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI of happy memory, has given the answer. To Bishop Turquetil, O. M. I., on a visit to Rome, he said, "If there were only one Eskimo family near the North Pole and it would take two years to reach them, I would still say to you: 'Go, as these people also have a right to redemption.'" The Holy Father was but echoing the command of Christ to "preach the Gospel to every creature." As Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston has so eloquently put it: "The existence of the Eskimo missions is incontrovertible proof that the missionary spirit of the Catholic Church burns as ardently today as when the Holy Ghost first descended upon the twelve Apostles."[7]

7. Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing, D. D., *The Battle of Hudson's Bay*, p. 84.

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Study Outline

Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

Part 1. Paragraphs 1-44

The initial success of the early Indian missionaries led them to believe that the native Americans would all be Catholics in a brief time. But this did not happen. For by the time the United States became a nation the flourishing missions had gone into a decline. It was not till the last half of the 19th century that a determined effort was made to rebuild the Indian missions. Progress since has been slow but steady.

It must be noted that each Indian tribe is a distinct nation. Again we must remember that the Indians are no longer a vanishing race. The birth rate now exceeds the death rate. In his present stage of development the Indian is for the most part civilized. Like the Negro he must face race discrimination. Once the whites cease to regard the Indian as inferior he will begin to take his place as a citizen.

The Indian's economic life calls for improvement. This is Government's responsibility. This does not mean that the white man's civilization should be imposed upon him. He is entitled to his own way of life as long as there is nothing evil in it. The crying need of the Indian today is Indian leadership. No organization has done more for the Indian materially as well as spiritually than the Catholic Church. One fourth of the 400,000 Indian population is Catholic.

The Indian apostolate has little glamor to it. It is drab, difficult and often discouraging. The missionaries' hope is in the children. The school is the urgent need of the Indian mission. But schools cannot develop on a shoestring economy. The Indian Mission problem is largely financial.

Questions

What was the condition of the Indian missions when the United States became a nation?
Do all American Indians belong to a single nation?
How does the Indian birthrate compare with the white birthrate?
In what is the Indian's position like the Negro's?
The Indian's problem may be reduced to one of economics. Explain.
Should the white man's way of life be imposed on the Indian?
Has Indian leadership developed up to the present?
Where is the largest number of Catholic Indians?
What qualifications must the Indian missioner have?
To what may be attributed the delinquency of the Indian?

Part 2. Paragraphs 45-85

The growth of Indian vocations has been slow and for some time will continue to be slow. The Indian missions, like all missions, must depend on the prayers and financial aid of those at home.

The Eskimos are a homogenous people. They are a migratory people too. Their social organization is the small group of families, not the tribe. Their manner of life make them easy victims of germs. In religion they are pagans. Animism is their common belief.

The first mission to the Eskimos was launched by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1794. Catholic missions in Alaska were begun by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1862. In 1886 the Jesuits entered the field. The Oblates founded the first permanent mission among the Canadian Eskimos in 1912. This was at Chesterfield Inlet.

Since Christianity penetrated the Arctic regions the inhabitants have increased. The Eskimos make fine Catholics. The Church, despite terrible odds, has marched steadily forward in the Far North. While there are today less than 5,000 Catholics out of a total population of 30,000, there is every reason to hope that the day will dawn when the majority of Eskimos will be Catholics. Present missionary achievement represents the labor of only a little more than sixty years.

Questions

1. What are the prospects for native vocations among the Indians?
2. Give a brief description of the Eskimo habitat.
3. Describe the social organization, habits and pagan beliefs of the Eskimo.
4. What of the morality of the pagan Eskimo?
5. Did the Eskimo have any religion before the coming of the white man?
6. What church established the first Eskimo mission?
7. Who were the first Catholic missionaries in the field?
8. How is the missionary catechumenate conducted among the Eskimos?
9. What has been the success of the Eskimo mission up to the present?
10. What did Pius XI say about the Eskimo mission?

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

The Rev. George M. Waggett, O.M.I., M.A. was born in South Boston, Mass., April 27, 1916. He attended Boston public grammar and high schools and graduated from English High School in 1934. The following September he entered the Oblate Juniorate, Holy Angels Collegiate Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., and the next year the Oblate Novitiate at Tewksbury, Mass. After making his first vows on September 8, 1936, he studied at the Oblate House of Philosophy, Newburgh, N. Y. and at the Oblate Scholasticate in Washington, D. C. He received his final vows on September 8, 1939 and was ordained on May 28, 1942. Following his ordination he did graduate work at the Catholic University (majoring in American Catholic History) and received his Master of Arts degree in 1944. Since then he has been teaching at Holy Angels Collegiate Institute, Buffalo, N. Y. (a high school for boys).

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The study outline and questions for "Modern Indian and Eskimo Missions" were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

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